

At a convention of citizens of the county of Lucas, held at Maumee, on the 1st day of July, 1854, of which F. L. NICHOLS was president, and D. A. PEASE secretary, Dr. DANIEL COOK, J. M. ASHLEY, Esq., and Hon. JOHN FITCH, were appointed a committee to address the electors of the fifth congressional district of Ohio.

#### ADDRESS

To the Electors of the Fifth Congressional District of Ohio.

FELLOW CITIZENS:—Designated by a meeting of the independent citizens of Lucas county, convened at Maumee City, on Saturday, the 1st of July, to address you on the present momentous crisis in our national affairs, and invite your active co-operation in the movement now being made throughout the country, to secure a more perfect union of the friends of freedom, we proceed to the performance of the duty assigned us, confident that we shall utter no sentiment and recommend no mode of action that will not meet a ready response from every unbiased citizen of the district; and desiring only to speak truthfully and earnestly of the alarming dangers that now beset us as a nation, we ardently invite you to a candid consideration of the facts herein presented.

We fear that in an age and country which loudly boasts of a progressive civilization, our rulers and representatives are fast committing us to the propagandism of an institution, which throughout the whole history of mankind has been the badge of barbarism and despotism.

When our fathers were about making that declaration, which is regarded as the most admirable exposition of the rights of man that has ever been published, they hoped that while it established the freedom of one race, it would in a few years exterminate the slavery of the other. Accordingly, Mr. Jefferson informs us that the original draft of his immortal declaration contained the following language:

"He has waged a cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people, who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur a miserable death in transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain, determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold. He has prostituted his negative by suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce, and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished dye, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes, committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another."

Such sentiments would seem worthy of all acceptance by humane, just and Christian men, and fit and proper to be incorporated in a paper, the exordium of which, holds this truth to be self-evident—that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The framers of the constitution contemplated the time when human slavery in these United States should be extinct.

The government was organized with vast concessions on the part of a great majority of the people, who were hostile to this institution. In the senate of the United States, each state was allowed two senators. As one of the results of this concession, six millions of white people at the south have thirty senators, while fifteen millions at the north have but thirty-two senators. By conceding five slaves to count as equal to three freedmen as a basis of representation in the house of representatives, two-thirds as many white citizens of the south send a representative to congress, as it requires at the north. More than twenty representatives from the south are this day in congress, representing property only, human chattels. The supreme court is so organized that less than

one-third of the white people are represented by five judges, while more than two-thirds are represented by four judges. We have lived under the present government sixty-five years, and during forty-nine years of that time, the president has been from a slave state. During the whole period a majority of the cabinet officers, the diplomatic stations abroad, and the public offices at Washington, have been filled by citizens of the slaveholding states. The consequence is, that the legislative, judicial and executive functions of the government, with all its immense patronage, have been unscrupulously wielded by the slave power for the propagandism of that most execrable of all institutions.

The people of the north, for half a century, have tolerated this condition of things without a murmur. If they were wronged, they were wronged under a constitution, which in its general features they loved, and regarded as just and wise, and which secured to them the blessings of a good government. [But of late, this constitution has been so disregarded, or perverted to sectional designs, that the great privileges and blessings, supposed to be forever sacred, have been trampled out.] Though our dearest rights have been outraged, our appeals disregarded, and the most solemn compact ever made by the nation violated and set at naught, by the dictation of the slave power; yet would we still protect the slave states in all their constitutional rights, privileges and guarantees; but we would not allow the money, patronage and influence of the national government to be used for the increase of their power, or the extension of slavery.

At this juncture all disguise is thrown off. Beginning with the acquisition of Texas, which Mr. Calhoun boldly declared was "to insure the permanent duration of slavery," southern politicians and the southern press have from day to day grown more arrogant and rapacious, until they have succeeded by a repeal of the Missouri compromise, and the passage of the Nebraska and Kansas territorial bills, in opening a territory embracing nearly half a million of square miles, once solemnly dedicated to freedom, to be colonized by slavery. The bold avowal is now openly made by presses and politicians of the south, of both the great political parties which have heretofore divided the country, that by conquest or purchase, Cuba must be acquired, two slave states created, and four more slave senators sent to the congress of the United States. Let us pause a moment and consider the practical results of such an annexation. Ohio and New York have to-day five millions of people. Cuba has half a million. A voter in Cuba will possess ten times as much political power in the senate as a free elector in New York or Ohio. When the Nebraska bill passed the senate of the United States, the six senators of New York, Ohio and Massachusetts represented as many free white men as all the senators of all the southern states. Yet their exercise of political power was scoffed at. Are you willing, then, as free men, as citizens of Ohio, to permit the small share of political power you now possess in the senate, to be further diminished by the addition of new slave states, purchased at an immense cost, with money from the national treasury? This inordinate share of power has again and again been exercised for sectional purposes. Millions have been expended from the national treasury to obtain territory to be devoted to slavery. Not one dollar for territory to be devoted to freedom, or even to secure to us the free navigation of the St. Lawrence. But, on the other hand, we have witnessed with mortification one half of free Oregon given up to Great Britain in violation of every principle of justice, and poor, weak, dying Mexico unscrupulously robbed of the richest of her domain to satisfy the demands of the slave oligarchy; and we have recently seen the national treasury bled to the amount of ten millions of dollars, to pay for a small strip of territory, not one-fourth as large as that which this same power dictated the surrender of to Great Britain. It is also openly avowed that a minister has been accredited to Spain, empowered to offer two hundred and fifty millions of dollars, for the purchase of the island of Cuba. A southern senator has mov-

ed for a withdrawal of our squadron from the coast of Africa, thus proclaiming to the civilized world that the export slave trade may be carried on without resistance from the United States. This same senator has moved for a suspension of the neutrality laws, existing between this country and Spain, to enable bands of armed marauders to invade Cuba from the United States without check or resistance, with the avowed purpose of preventing Spain from emancipating her slaves, and ultimately annexing the island to the United States as slave states.

The slave power has always been exercised against cheap postage, and in defence of the franking privilege. It has always been opposed to the democratic doctrine of granting homes to the homeless, and such sale and distribution of the public lands as would dispose of them for actual occupancy to individual settlers. At this moment, while three-fourths of all the commerce and travel which would conduce to support a railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific, exists and concentrates in the free states, it is seriously maturing plans for the establishment of a railroad within its own territory and latitude, by the use of the money of the nation, and the public lands, which belong to the people.

But the most notable illustrations of the perversion of political power to its own selfish purposes, are the suppression of the right of petition in congress for many long years, and at a later period the passage of the infamous fugitive slave law. We have no time to unfold the enormities of that law at length. Suffice it to say, that it converts and tortures a mandatory clause in the constitution to the free states "to deliver up" fugitives from justice and service, into a power to go into a free state and seize a fugitive; converts freemen like yourselves into slave hunters, or fines and imprisons you if you refuse; subverts every known procedure in courts of law, by remanding a man to slavery on purely *ex parte* evidence, (thus incurring the risk of dooming to slavery men as free as ourselves, as has been done in several instances under the operation of this law;) abrogates the most sacred constitutional rights of trial by jury and writ of *habeas corpus*; lays our peaceable cities under martial law, and places ropes and chains, a mercenary soldiery and hired ruffians and black-legs around the halls of justice in a free state, under which, and before whom the state authorities are compelled to crouch and creep; robs the common treasury of the whole people of hundreds of thousands of dollars to aid in executing a law revolting to the great mass of the people, and believed by many of them to be clearly unconstitutional.

The northern states have been again and again asked to concede, to yield, to compromise for the sake of harmony; but every new concession is seized upon as a stepping stone for further aggressions and more exorbitant demands.

When President Pierce came into power, he sacredly pledged himself on the steps of the national capital to abide by the compromises, as he then found them, and that during his term of office they should not be disturbed, if he had power to prevent it.—But a few short months had elapsed however, before these voluntary pledges were falsified, and aggressions unprovoked and uncalled for, have been committed without the shadow of an excuse, and that too, under the influence, power and sanction of this administration. A compromise, that had been reluctantly entered into on the part of the north, but which, after agreed upon, she had refused to disturb, and which had been regarded by the nation as sacred and binding for over thirty-three years, has been disregarded and trampled under foot by the reckless, domineering and covenant-breaking power. The acquisition of Cuba is now openly proclaimed. Almost the whole present session of congress has been occupied in the discussion of projects and plans, the whole object and design of which are, to strengthen and perpetuate the institution of slavery. Sectional projects have alone been deemed worthy of attention. The largest appropriations of money which have ever been made from the national treasury, have been purely sectional. Ambassadors have been repeatedly sent

abroad, avowedly to effect sectional ends. Congressmen have been purchased, overawed and converted into sectional tools.

The manner in which the atrocious plans of propagandism are carried out, is as offensive as the policy itself. Brute force has been threatened on both floors of congress. Senators from the north have been excluded from the committees of the body of which they were members; and one has been threatened with expulsion for vindicating his right of opinion and speech and faithfully representing his constituents. In the house of representatives, personal threats and assaults have frequently been substituted for argument, and in every case to carry out sectional designs. The whole power of social and fashionable life is brought to bear upon the man who is so *unfashionable* as to be guilty of a manly courage and a conscientious discharge of the duties he was elected to perform.

In view of all these facts, and many others of weight and importance, which might be adduced, we ask you, fellow-citizens, if it is not time that the institution of slavery should be *denationalized* and the general government brought back to the purity and simplicity of the republicanism of the revolution? Is it not time that this oligarchy be made to understand that slavery must be kept entirely within the limits of the states where it now exists; that the whole public domain of the nation shall be forever protected from the blight and curse that it inflicts; that the treasury of the nation be relieved from all expenses incident to its propagation and protection; that measures be taken forever to prevent the acquisition or addition of more slave states; that men be sent to both houses of congress who shall hereafter represent the institutions of freedom and not of slavery?

In this crisis an important and responsible duty devolves upon the electors of this congressional district: You are to be a presence in the halls of congress either by a friend of freedom, or a mere instrument in the hands of the slave power. You are to decide this question at the ballot-box, and now have it in your power, by disregarding party dictation and appeals to passions and prejudices, used by interested and unscrupulous men, and a subsidized and vascillating press—to select such a representative as will truly and faithfully represent you in the councils of the nation.

We appeal to you to disregard all considerations but courage, fitness, truth, fidelity, and conscientious determination to reflect your sentiments and opinions, in the candidate selected to represent you. To sever yourselves from old party associations, we know to be no very easy task; but we feel bound to say that the representative elected or dictated by the party leaders in either of the old political organizations will be most likely to misrepresent you. These organizations have always had and still continue an alliance with the slave power by whom they are controlled. The exponents and representatives of that power at Washington affiliate with no northern men who are not its tools. The whigs and democrats of the south have united in a solid phalanx.—They go for propagandism as one man—animated by a single purpose. Whigs and democrats of the south with equal zeal, rally around the administration of President Pierce. A national nomination of a whig for the presidency, is no longer possible and will never be attempted. The nomination by the party now in power, of a man not committed, and pledged to obey the behests of the slave power, is impossible.

The two-thirds rule, rendering it necessary that a presidential nominee shall have two-thirds of all the votes of a national convention, makes it impossible for any man to be nominated to that exalted station, and vested with all its power and patronage, who is not the mere tool of the slavery propagandists. The vast patronage of the government, by the use of party machinery, is now unscrupulously used to promote sectional objects and the designs of a peculiar institution. The will of less than three hundred thousand slaveholders, who rule and control the six millions of the south, is paramount as the government is now managed, to the known will of fifteen millions of people in the free states.